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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002616

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE, AND AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SU](#) [UN](#) [CD](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: DPA NON-SIGNATORY COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE PLANNING

REF: A. KHARTOUM 02434

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 02479

[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 02525

[1](#)D. KHARTOUM 02538

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: The development of an organizational conference for Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatory commanders is moving forward slowly and fitfully. Development of a conference is hindered by numerous field commanders touting separate efforts with vague objectives and disjointed coordination. Given the paucity of NGOs with the right experience and no hidden political agendas, the African Union (AU) must weigh in with immediate support. The AU needs funding and personnel resources to ensure success and may need additional prodding. The support of the international community in conjunction with the AU must shift out of Khartoum to Darfur, where direct communication with the commanders will facilitate organization. End summary.

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Hidden Agendas in Non-Signatory Conference Proposals  
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[1](#)2. (C) Two separate delegations from Abdul Shafi supporters are reported to be in negotiations with various SLA non-signatory commanders. A delegation reportedly is in Jebel Marra to discuss a conference proposal with Abdel Wahid commanders and another is in the vicinity of Birmaza in North Darfur to negotiate with G-19 and SLM Unity commanders. Abdul Shafi is seeking travel papers to depart Asmara November 8 to Darfur via Nairobi. Commanders Osman Bushara, Suleiman Marjan, and Adam Bakhiet all profess to be leading efforts for a conference in North Darfur. Minni Minawi continues to hold discussions with all key non-signatory leaders. The Government continues efforts to splinter non-signatories and sign on individual groups, the most recent attempt reportedly a JEM faction in Nyala. Meanwhile, the Government has reportedly endorsed an effort by Asmara to coax non-signatories back to the negotiating table.

[1](#)3. (C) Momentum for a conference continues to grow as G-19 and other former SLM/A-Minawi commanders that joined the National Redemption Front (NRF) are concerned that they are losing leverage with further splintering of factions and becoming increasingly more suspicious of the JEM's strategy and motivations. Several of these commanders have told our international partners that they should be identified as SLM forces, not NRF elements. But there is no agreement among these commanders on where unity of non-signatory commanders leads. Unconfirmed reports indicate that Sulieman Jamoush wants to leave UN protection at Kadugli to rejoin this group with the intent of gaining leadership and tightening their relationship with the JEM.

¶4. (S) Several commanders have cautioned that Abdul Shafi continues to organize a conference with the intention of ousting Abdel Wahid. Minawi confirmed that Abdel Wahid has told him that joining the NRF was a tactical move, that his differences with JEM are too wide to bridge. Wahid reportedly has indicated he is willing to make a deal with Minawi if he could find a way to leave Eritrea. Khalil Ibrahim has declined an invitation to Asmara as not timely, but also reportedly because his travel papers are held by France. We have also heard that Chad has declined to participate in the Asmara conference. Both may have an insight into Sudan,s real agenda in backing a conference that purports to reopen discussions with the DPA Declaration of Principles and a solidification of all non-signatory commanders under the NRF umbrella. The international partners group formed to support a conference (Gang of Five) consensus is that President Bashir,s inner circle supports the Asmara conference to add another layer of confusion to the efforts to organize and unify the non-signatories.

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African Union Missing in Action  
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¶5. (C) Meanwhile, there is some support in the AU for an effort to counter the Government's attempt to continue splintering the non-signatories. Sam Ibok has refused several Government requests to add small factions to the list of declarants. However, all three senior AU political leaders in Khartoum were absent the week of Oct. 29 ) Nov. ¶5. The best the AU receptionist could do was to connect Embassy Officer to the Political Section's secretary. AU leadership is supposed to return to Khartoum with Ambassador

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Djinnit and Abdullah Mohamad, the chair of the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation Preparatory Committee Nov 4-5.

¶6. (SBU) The Gang of Five concurs that, given the reported political agendas of several potential NGO coordinators, the international community should rely on the AU to lead an effort to unify the non-signatories and bring them to the negotiating table. The Gang also agrees that it is within the mandate of the AU and has the potential to add a success to the AU Plus column in Sudan. Efforts are underway to meet with Ambassador Ibok, AU DPA Implementation Coordinator, as soon as possible to press the initiative forward. However, previous reporting (REF C) indicates lukewarm support for the effort to organize a non-signatory conference. The international community may need to press the AU into action.

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Shifting the Gang of Five,s Effort to the Field  
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¶7. (C) There is a considerable effort to engage with the field commanders by telephone. However, absent an official preparatory or organizational body established by the non-signatory commanders, there are no solid logistic requirements, no organizing body to determine participants or objectives, and no facilitator to mitigate disagreements between the commanders. To achieve a successful commanders' conference in the near-term, it is imperative to get the AU to lead the effort. It will also greatly facilitate coordination if this effort moves to Darfur, where face-to-face discussions can reconcile these shortcomings.

¶8. (SBU) The Gang of Five has agreed to provide personnel to the AU both in Khartoum and El Fasher if the AU takes the lead. PQQp6NQ  
for follow-on preparatory meetings and a joint political leaders, and commanders, conference facilitated by Justice Africa.

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Comment  
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[19](#). (SBU) Momentum provided by the commanders themselves and coordinated international efforts provide a degree of optimism for a successful engagement effort and movement towards additional signatories. Navigating the road to a commanders, conference, however, is pitted with unknowns and potential misdirection from numerous sources. Failure to convene a conference in the near term will lead to further fracturing of the non-signatory forces and play into the hands of the Government. End comment.

RPOWERS